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COMMANDERS DIGEST

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE • WASHINGTON, D.C.

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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Prisoners Of War, Missing In Action

Series Of PW/MIA Articles Begin On Page Four

Since the initiation of the Paris talks in January 1969, the United States has consistently placed the prisoner of war issue at the top of matters to be settled.

Repeatedly U.S. delegates have stressed that adherence to provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war is a humane consideration separate from military and political issues to be resolved and should be so treated.

This position has been totally ignored by the other side. The enemy said negotiations for the repatriation of American prisoners of war could start only after the United States had agreed to—

- Withdraw all American troops and those of other foreign countries by June 30, 1971, at the same time terminating its Vietnamization policy and
- Remove the three top officials of the present Saigon government.

With these major political issues placed ahead of the humanitarian consideration of prisoner treatment and appropriate immediate repatriation, the other side had obviously launched a crude attempt at blackmail. Unquestionably the other side hoped to force U.S. compromise of the Paris parley for the return of American prisoners of war.

Madam Binh has held fast to this position despite a series of specific U.S. proposals for immediate prisoner exchange. Beginning particularly with President Nixon's October 7 Southeast Asia peace proposal, the United States and Vietnam have emphasized their appeals for progress on the PW issue in the last three months. To date all have been rejected by the other side.

Air Force Guard, Reserve Units Undergoing Aircraft Modernization

The Air Force has announced plans to re-equip with more modern aircraft nine Guard and Reserve flying units.

The modernization involves eight Groups of the Air National Guard and one Group of the Air Force Reserve.

Officials said, "Aircraft now assigned to the units and not required elsewhere in the Air Force will be retired. The changes in equipment will not result in any significant personnel changes."

Air National Guard units involved are:

- The 174th Tactical Fighter Group, Syracuse, N.Y., now flying F–86 aircraft, is presently converting to A–37 aircraft.
- The 132d Tactical Fighter Group, Des Moines, Iowa, and the 149th Tactical Fighter Group, San Antonio, Tex., both flying F–84s, will convert to F–100s next spring.
- The 192d Tactical Fighter Group, Richmond, Va., also equipped with F–84s, will be equipped with F–105s next spring.
- The 184th Tactical Fighter Group, Wichita, Kan., which now has F–100s, will convert to F–105s and be redesignated the 184th Tactical Fighter Training Group in the spring.
- The 109th Military Airlift Group, Schenectady, N.Y., and the 133rd Military Airlift Group, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn., both now flying C-97 transports, will be equipped with C–130 transports. The 133rd will receive their aircraft this winter, the 109th, in the spring.
- The 118th Military Airlift Group, Nashville, Tenn., which now has C–124 transports, will also receive C–130s in the spring.

All three airlift groups will be redesignated as Tactical Airlift Groups.

The Air Force Reserve unit affected is the 931st Tactical Air Support Group at Grissom AFB, Ind. Now flying 0–2 and U–3 aircraft, it will be equipped with A–37 aircraft next spring and be redesignated the 931st Special Operations Squadron.

Air Force Academy Cadet Is Oxford Bound

Second Lieutenant Alfred M. Wurglitz, a 1970 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo., was one of 32 Americans named December 20, for a coveted Rhodes Scholarship.

The 22-year old former cadet is the 14th Air Force Academy man to be selected for the honor from 13 graduating classes going back to the first in 1959.

He will receive a full two-year scholarship to Oxford University, Oxford, England. With classes commencing in October, he will study jurisprudence (law).

The scholarship was established in 1902 following the death of British statesman and diplomat Cecil Rhodes with the aim of "promoting international understanding and world peace."

PROJECT HANDCLASP—Mrs. Rita Pennington receives a Project Handclasp plaque for her outstanding services in the Navy charity program from Commander Daniel Webster, West Coast Project Handclasp Director. The ceremony took place in the office of Captain J. J. Pace, Naval Air Systems Command Representative, Pacific, at NAS North Island, Calif. Left to right are Capt. J. J. Pace; Mrs. Pennington, Administrative Branch Head of NAVAIRSYSCOMREPAC; Cmdr. Webster; and Lieutenant Commander Donald Pouliot, Special Representative of Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Chief of Naval Operations, for Operation Helping Hand.

VA Announces 1971 Dividend For NSLI, USGLI Holders

The Veterans Administration has announced that a record $275 million in dividends will be paid in 1971 to more than 4.1 million veterans holding World War I and World War II insurance policies.

Administrator of Veterans Affairs Donald E. Johnson said the higher dividends are possible because of increased interest earning of the National Service Life Insurance (NSLI) and United States Government Life Insurance (USGLI) trust funds.

He noted that dividends totalling $255 million and averaging about $64 each will go to about 4,000,000 veterans with NSLI (World War II) policies.

The 163,400 veterans with USGLI (World War I) policies will receive $20 million in dividends, averaging about $122 apiece.

The dividends will be paid in 1971 on the anniversary dates of the policies.

The VA Administrator stressed that since payment of dividends will be automatic, veterans need not write to the VA to receive payment. Veterans who have instructed VA to retain their dividends will receive appropriate statements, Mr. Johnson advised.

Mr. Johnson explained that the amount of dividend a veteran receives depends on such factors as the plan of insurance, age of the insured, age of the policy and its face value.

'Fighting With Bullets Instead Of Bodies'

Unmanned Sensors Help Save Americans

"We are making unusual efforts to avoid having the American young man stand toe-to-toe, eyeball-to-eyeball, or even rifle-to-rifle against an enemy that may outnumber him on the battlefield," said Major General Ellis W. Williamson, former combat commander in Vietnam and now Deputy Chief of the Army's Office of Reserve Components.

He testified recently before a Senate subcommittee on Army sensor battlefield activities in Vietnam.

During his visual aids presentation, the General pointed out that the Army is trying to fight the enemy with bullets instead of the bodies of young Americans —"firepower, not manpower," he said.

In that context, the General assured the subcommittee that unmanned sensors "have contributed materially to saving American lives.

". . . these sensors have helped us to make the first step toward the automated battlefield," he said, adding: "this is a worthwhile approach toward 'fighting with bullets instead of bodies'; that is, getting the job done with minimum danger to friendly personnel."

Beginning with the early use of the sensor in Vietnam, General Williamson told a 'real war story' about the device. (The 25th Infantry Division's initial employment of the sensor was in 1968 near Saigon).

The scene was fire base 'Mahone', a relatively secure troop recuperation area near Dau Tieng. Following are additional excerpts from the General's testimony:

"Early one morning before daylight our unmanned sensors alerted the monitor and he, in turn, alerted the command group and the fire support elements.

GENERAL WILLIAMSON

"After a short while it was determined that an enemy force was in a bamboo thicket several hundred yards from our position. Our artillery guns and mortars were laid and on signal all opened fire at one; we ceased fire and waited. Absolutely nothing moved, and we feared that maybe we had reacted to a false alarm.

"At daylight a patrol was sent out to investigate the area. They found 21 enemy dead and picked up four live wounded prisoners.

"They also found 129 rounds of heavy weapons ammunition, three rocket propelled grenade launchers, a complete mortar and flame thrower.

"This is a pretty good battle when you consider that the enemy did not launch his attack—in fact he didn't get off the first shot.

"I am confident that breakfast time in the troop concentration area the next morning would have been considerably different if the unmanned sensor had not told us, in advance, that the enemy was in the area and that he was up to something."

First Step Toward Automated Battlefield

General Williamson explained that every military commander is always on the lookout for a fool-proof early warning system that will allow him to execute his plans early enough to thwart his enemy before that enemy can become truly dangerous.

Then, too, he said no one can say that the unmanned sensors, the radars, or the night observation devices are the total difference between victory and defeat; between high or low friendly casualty figures.

He does believe, however, that any soldier who has engaged an enemy in combat will vouch for the importance of early warning, how essential it is to know where and when the enemy is moving, and how it is better to fight the enemy at a distance with firepower than expend manpower as the enemy makes a close-in assault.

But, like anything new, the sensor must completely prove itself on the battlefield, General Williamson said. "We tried our best to make it work during those early stages of development and we consider that we did a reasonably good job."

The Army is continuing tests at Ft. Hood, Tex., and elsewhere, he said.

COMMANDERS DIGEST

THIS PUBLICATION CONTAINS OFFICIAL INFORMATION, NEWS AND POLICY, DIRECT FROM WASHINGTON AUTHORIZED SOURCES.

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THE NIXON PEACE PLAN:

President Nixon specifically included the prisoner of war issue in a five-point proposal he termed "a major new initiative for peace" in Indochina during a nation-wide telecast on October 7, 1970.

He said: ". . . I propose the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of war held by both sides.

"War and imprisonment should be over for all these prisoners. They and their families have already suffered too much.

"I propose that all prisoners of war, without exception and without condition, be released now to return to the place of their choice.

"And I propose that all journalists and other innocent civilian victims of the conflict be released immediately as well.

"The immediate release of all prisoners of war would be a simple act of humanity.

"But it could be even more. It could serve to establish good faith, the intent to make progress, and thus improve the prospects for negotiation.

"We are prepared to discuss specific procedures to complete the speedy release of all prisoners."

U.S.-RVN Proposal For 10-1 Ratio Exchange Of PWs

During the 94th Plenary Session of the Paris meetings on December 10, the United States-South Vietnam delegation voiced in even more specific language a prisoner exchange proposal that would return 10 North Vietnamese prisoners for every one American and other free world prisoner held by the other side.

As first stated by Republic of Vietnam Ambassador Pham Dang Lam and then endorsed by U.S. Ambassador David K. E. Bruce, the proposal offered the immediate release of all North Vietnamese prisoners of war held in South Vietnam in exchange for the immediate release of Government of the Republic of Vietnam personnel held outside South Vietnam and all United States and other Free World personnel held by the other side in Indochina.

Calling attention again to President Nixon's proposals of October 7, Ambassador Bruce said that the immediate release of prisoners would not only be a simple act of humanity but could also serve to improve the prospects for general negotiations.

He said, "the humanitarian issue of PWs need not and should not await resolution of other military and political issues and that the United States did not accept the obvious attempt to use prisoners of war as a political pawn."

In the hope of effecting a possible release of prisoners before Christmas, Ambassador Bruce proposed that negotiators meet the following day and daily thereafter to arrange procedures by which the proposal could be put into effect immediately.

The Communists promptly rejected the South Vietnam-United States proposal but offered to discuss the matter if demands made by Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, chief Viet Cong delegate, last September 17 (including a complete U.S. troop pullout by June 30, 1971, and displacement of the present Saigon administration) were first met.

If the proposal made by the United States and the Republic of Vietnam were carried into effect, some 8,200 North Vietnamese prisoners of war held in camps operated by South Vietnam could be exchanged for all U.S. and Free World forces prisoners of war. The latter number is a far smaller one, probably about 800. The exact number is unknown because to date the North Vietnamese have persisted in refusals to provide official identification of persons held. As for American prisoners in SEA, the United States government now lists 457 on PW rolls. State Department and Defense Department officials believe many more of the 1,552 PW/MIA total are in fact prisoners.

U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds perform "Missing Man" formation in tribute to Americans held prisoner and those missing in action.

RVN Offers Release Of Prisoners Without Conditions

A proposal to repatriate a specific contingent of North Vietnamese prisoners of war was made December 23 by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).

During the 96th Plenary Session of the Paris talks, RVN Ambassador Pham Dang Lam announced South Vietnam's decision to release during the 1971 Tet Holiday a group of sick and wounded North Vietnamese PWs who have asked to be repatriated back to North Vietnam. The decision is expected to affect about 50 PWs and has been scheduled by South Vietnam for January 24.

Ambassador Lam said the release is not subject to any conditions and nothing is asked in return from the North Vietnamese authorities.

In unilaterally taking such an initiative, Ambassador Lam said, his government is "motivated by a humanitarian concern and wishes to enable these incurably sick and disabled North Vietnamese prisoners of war to return to their homes on the eve of Tet."

South Vietnam authorities hope, he continued, that the measure "will be matched by an equal measure of good will on the part of the North Vietnamese authorities who have here an opportunity to demonstrate that they, too, care for their own men."

Ambassador Lam proposed a site for the repatriation and said that the list of names of prisoners to be released and other details would be communicated to North Vietnam authorities.

The South Vietnamese, he said, "are prepared to examine in the most liberal spirit and solely for humanitarian considerations, any counter-proposals the North Vietnamese authorities wish to make."

During remarks at the same session, American Ambassador Bruce termed the South Vietnamese offer a demonstration through concrete action of its adherence to the precepts of humane treatment required by international law and custom.

He said that the holiday season was also an appropriate time for the other side to begin taking concrete and specific steps to provide humane treatment to the prisoners held and to permit impartial verification that their treatment accords with accepted international standards.

"I would like particularly to call attention to the plight of our prisoners you hold in South Vietnam who, even at Christmas, are held incommunicado, unidentified and without any means of communication with their loved ones," he said.

"The record of prisoner treatment in North Vietnam has been unsatisfactory, but the treatment of the men held by your side in South Vietnam can only be described as disgraceful."

Ambassador Bruce also emphasized the second question of prisoner release. He said that the United States and South Vietnam still await "a constructive response" to the U.S. proposal for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of war on both sides and to the specific U.S.-South Vietnam proposal made at the 90th Plenary Session regarding the release of prisoners.

In later remarks Bruce referenced North Vietnam's repetition of its demand that the United States agree to withdraw its forces unilaterally from South Vietnam by June 30, 1971, or by another date established without regard to the question of withdrawals of North Vietnamese forces. He said that, instead of asking the same question repeatedly, the other side could be far more useful to the Paris task if they would manifest their intentions with regard to the withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

"When you do that" he said, " we will have made progress on this crucial issue.

"We have made it abundantly clear that we are prepared to negotiate an agreed timetable for complete withdrawals as part of an overall settlement. What that agreed timetable should be is a matter for negotiation. The settlement must also encompass resolution of the question of North Vietnamese troop withdrawals from South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos as well as U. S. troop withdrawals from South Vietnam."

Ambassador Bruce proposed once again that all prisoners of war, without exception and without condition, be released now to return to the place of their choice and that all journalists and other innocent civilian victims of the conflict be released immediately.

"Are you prepared to agree to such release of all those held on both sides? We are prepared to discuss specific procedures to complete the speedy release of all such prisoners."

Open Letter From President Nixon To Wives, Families Of PWs, MIAs

Although I have corresponded with many of you individually, I would like, during this Christmas season, to address this letter openly to each and all of you —to all the wives and families of our men held prisoner in Southeast Asia— and also to the many others who care so intensely about them. I know that nothing I say could truly comfort you and I only wish my words could bring back your loved one at once. However, I would like to tell you about our efforts to solve this problem, what we have achieved so far, and what we plan to do.

The basic obstacle, of course, is the barbaric, inhuman attitude of Hanoi in violation of the Geneva Convention and all standards of human decency. In the face of this, during the past two years there has been a wide range of efforts on behalf of our men lost in Indo-China. Early in 1969 I directed that there be an intensive review of the prisoner of war problem. I decided that it was time to take new measures, that the enemy's cruel and manifestly illegal policy toward our men should be exposed fully to public attention in this country and around the world.

One of the subjects we have emphasized continually, at the Paris Talks and elsewhere, has been to gain mail privileges for our men. This effort has produced only limited success. As you know, by the start of 1969 families had received less than 600 letters from only 100 men held in North Vietnam during the entire period of the war. As of today, 332 families have received over 3,000 letters, and we are confident there will be more. Although these letters are short, obviously written under scrutiny and censorship, they are welcomed. And from these letters, over 30 previously listed as Missing in Action have been reclassified as prisoners of war. There has, however, been only one letter ever from a prisoner held in South Vietnam and none from our men in Laos.

We have also consistently demanded that Hanoi should permit our men to receive packages from their families on a regular basis. This has also brought about some improvement although the situation remains unacceptable. Prior to January 1970, Hanoi leaders had allowed our men to receive packages only three times. In January 1970, Hanoi made it known that it would allow our men in North Vietnam to receive a package every other month. They added that an extra large package—11 pounds—would be permitted at Christmas.

These limited gains are of course not enough. They do not extend to our men lost in South Vietnam or in Laos. Even for those lost in North Vietnam there is no certainty that all letters and packages reach them. And Hanoi has cruelly played on the hopes and suffering of innocent people.

In recent weeks, the Hanoi authorities have released lists said to identify the American prisoners they hold. These lists duplicated others we already have. As you know, the military services have information identifying others as having been captured in North Vietnam. These lists also tell us nothing about our men lost in South Vietnam or elsewhere in Indo-China. We will, of course, continue to hold the Communist authorities fully accountable for all the Americans they hold and for the fullest possible accounting of the dead and the missing.

Of equal concern is the treatment of our prisoners and their early release. To help ensure that our men are well treated, we have proposed repeatedly that there should be impartial inspection of the other side's prisoner camps just as there is for prisoner of war camps in the Republic of Vietnam. We have frequently reiterated our concern about this in Paris. At my specific direction, Ambassador Bruce renewed our proposal for impartial inspection in the Paris meeting of December 3. Despite worldwide support for our position on this question, the Communist authorities again cruelly rejected this proposal, although impartial inspection of prisoner of war camps is among the most elementary requirements of the Geneva Convention.

As part of our wide-ranging diplomatic effort, I sent [Colonel] Frank Borman to 12 nations this past summer to enlist support for our cause. Wherever he went, Col. Borman found sympathy and understanding, and renewed offers of assistance. This did not surprise me, for in my own meetings with foreign leaders I have found sympathy for our concern and support for our efforts. These main public efforts are but a small part of our continued diplomatic campaign. Our Ambassadors throughout the world have used our diplomatic resources fully to help convince the other side to treat our men humanely and to release them soon.

In these efforts we have welcomed the support of private organizations, the Red Cross and, above all, the families of our prisoners and missing personnel who by their conduct have personally testified to the depth of feeling on this subject. Many have traveled to far places to appeal directly to leaders of the other side. The news media throughout the world have helped make sure that our prisoners are not forgotten men.

Our Government and the families of our men are not alone in their efforts to improve the lot of our prisoners of war in Indo-China. The United States Congress, as you know, has been united in expressing its opinion on this subject. The United Nations on December 9 passed a strongly worded resolution calling for compliance with the Geneva Con-

vention requirements. Hanoi has adamantly refused to budge from its position of holding our men as hostages, denying us even elementary information.

As we approach 1971 we face above all the question of the release of our men. On October 7, in my Indo-China peace initiative, I proposed the immediate release of all POWs on both sides. On December 10 we proposed, as a first step, the release of all North Vietnam prisoners of war held in South Vietnam in return for the release of all American and free world prisoners in Indo-China and any South Vietnamese prisoners held outside South Vietnam. This is as generous a prisoner-release proposal as history has ever known. We have, in effect, offered to exchange 8,000 North Vietnamese prisoners for 800 free world prisoners. I have sought to approach this subject on a humane basis and to keep it separate from the political and military issues of the war. Despite the other side's abrupt rejection of our proposals they remain in effect. You have my assurance that we are ready instantly to proceed toward arrangements for the release of all prisoners of war on both sides.

In the meantime, to demonstrate our readiness to comply with the appropriate international standards, the South Vietnamese Government each year has released groups of sick and wounded North Vietnamese prisoners. Another such release will take place shortly.

Hanoi, however, has so far rebuffed every effort to obtain release of our men or to verify the conditions of their treatment. This attitude violates not only the Geneva Convention, which Hanoi had pledged to observe, but all common standards of human decency. It is barbaric. It has been universally and justifiably condemned.

In closing, may I say how deeply I feel the sorrow you have known from this conflict. Along with the others in the Government closest to this problem, I will not forget the strength, the loyalty and the dignity with which you have borne your burden. I can do no less than pledge to you that we will not rest until every prisoner has returned to his family and the missing have been accounted for.

With every good wish,

Sincerely

/s/ RICHARD NIXON

American Prisoners Of War And Missing In Action In Southeast Asia

COUNTRY	MISSING	CAPTURED	TOTAL
North Vietnam	403	378	781
South Vietnam	463	78	541
Laos	227	3	230
Totals:	1,093	459	1,552

STATISTICAL RECAPITULATION BY YEAR LOST

	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	TOTAL
Missing	4	54	206	249	284	200	96	1,093
Captured	3	74	93	160	113	11	5	459
Totals:	7	128	299	409	397	211	101	1,552

CAPTURED ACKNOWLEDGED BY ENEMY

COUNTRY	MAIL	PROPAGANDA	TOTAL
North Vietnam	331	18	349
South Vietnam	1	19	20
Laos	0	1	1
Totals:	332	38	370

MAIL STATISTICS

	AS OF JANUARY 1969	AS OF NOVEMBER 1970
Total letters received	620	2,700
Total number of writers	103	332

Only nine American prisoners held in North Vietnam have been allowed repatriation by the Hanoi government. Most of these men had been prisoners for less than two years. Seventeen known prisoners have been murdered or have died in Viet Cong captivity. The physical condition of the men who have been released has been far below normal standards.

Ambassador Bruce Calls Enemy Position On American PWs 'Attempt At Blackmail'

In his first press conference since becoming chief United States Delegate to the Paris talks last August, Ambassador David K. E. Bruce termed the other side's position on the prisoner of war issue "a crude and unacceptable attempt at blackmail."

He added, "The reaction of the other side has been totally negative. They show no concern for their own men and flout our concern for ours. They have refused even to discuss the prisoner of war question unless we agree first to their basic preconditions to negotiations.

"Hanoi and the Viet Cong must understand, in unmistakable terms, that their past and existing attitude on the prisoner of war question is intolerable. We will continue to pursue the twin objectives of humane treatment and early release of our men by all means available to us. Our men and their families deserve nothing less."

In the prepared statement delivered at the beginning of the December 1 meeting with an international press corps Ambassador Bruce called the Son Tay action to rescue American prisoners "certainly the most daring and dramatic of many efforts the United States Government and American people have made on behalf of our missing or captured men."

He continued, "All of these efforts reflect grave concern over their fate; there is no issue on which the American people are more united and more determined."

This concern, he said, is the result of "the other side's shameful attitude on the prisoner of war question.

"The truth is that the other side has failed in virtually every respect to treat our prisoners of war decently or in accordance with internationally accepted standards of civilized behavior.

"The most recent evidence of this is the distressing news that more of our men have died in captivity. We know that some of these men were alive in North Vietnamese hands after being shot down because they were identified as such through the other side's own propaganda media. But we have no information on how or when they died, nor do we have official confirmation of their deaths."

The record in regard to those captured or missing in South Vietnam and Laos is even worse than that for those held in North Vietnam, Ambassador Bruce said.

"Except for a few propaganda broadcasts, we have never had any information from any source whatever on the fate of these men. Over all these years exactly one letter has been received from a person in this category. We know that several prisoners in South Vietnam have been murdered, and we fear for the fate of many others."

Speaking still of the issue that he says has been raised in more than half of the plenary sessions and has taken a large portion of his time since he assumed the chief United States role, Ambassador Bruce said it is "clear that the other side has deliberately chosen to flout their international legal obligations under the 1949 Geneva Convention and their moral and humanitarian obligations to the prisoners and their families.

"They have chosen to try to use these men and our deep concern for them as bargaining pawns to achieve their political objectives. This is unconscionable and unacceptable. This is inhumane to the prisoners themselves; it is also inhumane to their families."

Ambassador Bruce said to use the word "negotiations" in regard to the Paris meetings is a misstatement in that "there have never been negotiations, as far as I understand the term."

He said he considered the prisoner issue the easiest of matters before the Paris delegations to settle and that even the other issues were not difficult to negotiate provided the other side would engage in a true parley.

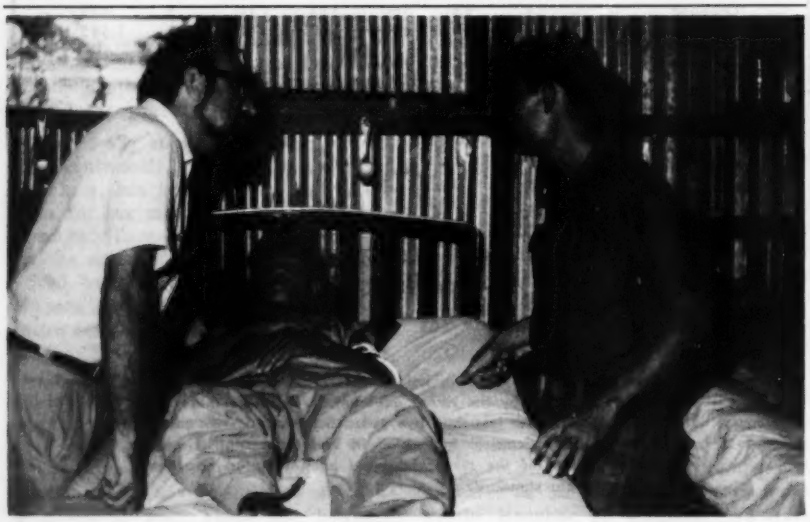
"They have never shown any tendency whatever to do so," he added.

The meetings have gone on, he said, for what would be two years in January 1971 and "as I said, in the common acceptance of the word there has never been any indication whatever that they were serious about having a negotiation."

Ambassador Bruce released to the international press two current summary sheets highlighting facts in the SEA prisoner of war matter:

(1) list of North Vietnamese violations of the 1949 Geneva Convention and

(2) statistical recapitulation of American prisoners and missing in action in Southeast Asia.



The International Committee of Red Cross regularly inspects all PW/MIA camps operated by RVN.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF NORTH VIETNAM (DRV)

Violations Of 1949 Geneva Convention

RELATIVE TO THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR*

(To which the DRV acceded in 1957)

ARTICLE	REQUIREMENT	DRV PERFORMANCE
13	PWs must be humanely treated, protected; reprisals against PWs prohibited.	Paraded in streets, forced to make statements; some torture.
21	PWs not to be held in "close confinement."	Many PWs held in solitary confinement for years.
23	Mark PW camps so as visible from air, give information on camp locations.	No markings on camps; locations concealed.
26	Provide sufficient food, prevent loss of weight, take account of normal diet.	Released PWs state that standard fare consists of pumpkin soup, rice, bread, pig fat. All PWs underweight and suffering from malnutrition.
30	Adequate medical care.	Much evidence of inadequate medical care (photos, released PWs); prisoners dying in camps.
34	Regular religious services.	Only evidence in films of some Christmas services.
70	Write to family within one week of capture.	Some have not written for five years.
71	Minimum of 2 letters and 4 cards a month.	Average of 2-3 letters per year (none at all for some).
72	Free receipt of parcels.	DRV states that PWs can receive a package every other month. Evidence indicates delivery is irregular; parcels sent to "dead" not returned.
109	Immediate repatriation of seriously sick and wounded. Release of PWs long held in capitivity.	No regular release of sick and wounded or long held PWs; state of health or duration of imprisonment has not appeared to be a determining factor in those releases which have taken place.
120	Advise of deaths in captivity, full official information on circumstances, cause, burial, grave identification.	Rare assertion of death through unofficial and irregular channels, no details.
122	Advise promptly names of all PWs held.	Never released official or complete list.
126	Neutral inspection of all camps, interview of PWs without witnesses.	No inspection; propaganda interviews only.

** Released by U. S. Ambassador Bruce at December 1, 1970, press conference in Paris.*

President Nixon: "It Gave Hope . . ."

"I believe that when we look at the record here, all of the information with regard to the raid has been completely put out; there has been no attempt to withhold anything. It was a very brave attempt. I am very proud of the men who participated in it. I regret that it did not succeed. But I think it gave hope to the men who were there. And I think it also gave a great deal of hope to their wives who are here."

—President Richard Nixon during his press conference December 10 in answering a question concerning the PW rescue attempt at Son Tay on the outskirts of Hanoi November 21.

Secretary Laird Describes Son Tay Search, Rescue Mission Before Senate Committee

In a special appearance before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on November 24, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird emphasized again the mounting concern over the plight of American prisoners of war in Southeast Asia and described circumstances that led to the Son Tay rescue attempt on November 21.

His recommendation for the execution of the search and rescue mission, Secretary Laird said, "was made after discussions across a broad spectrum of PW interests, including conversations with Ambassadors Bruce and Habib in Paris."

Mr. Laird continued, "At a time when Americans are dying in captivity, some have claimed that this search and rescue attempt might have jeopardized the lives of American prisoners. It is my firm belief that the lives of our American servicemen held captive are in danger every day that Hanoi holds them and refuses to abide by the humanitarian provisions of the Geneva Convention. In the absence of inspections by the International Red Cross or another impartial organization, we can never be certain of the safety and well being of our men.

"As it became clear to me that Hanoi, week after week, month after month, and year after year, was rebuffing our efforts at Paris for meaningful negotiations, particularly concerning the release of prisoners of war, I could not ignore the fact that our men were dying in captivity."

Saying he had not faced a more challenging decision since becoming Secretary of Defense, Mr. Laird told Senate Committee members that he had "concluded there was no acceptable alternative than to recommend that the volunteer force, now highly trained and well rehearsed for its humanitarian mission, should be authorized to make a valiant attempt to save their fellow Americans."

Crediting Brigadier General Leroy J. Manor, USAF, and Colonel Arthur D. Simons, USA, as leaders of the mission into the suspected prisoner of war compound, Mr. Laird said they "and their dedicated and courageous men, soldiers and airmen, performed heroically. What they did, in my view, was to demonstrate to all our citizens and to all the world that our prisoners of war are not forgotten."

Late in the summer of 1970, the Secretary said, he had received and reviewed carefully a detailed contingency search and rescue plan for Americans held in captivity. He approved preparations for perfecting the plan and later recommended it to President Nixon, who approved its execution.

"It is my firm belief," Mr. Laird told the Committee, "that if there had been prisoners of war at Son Tay, they would be free men today.

"The other side has referred to our prisoners and missing men as 'just 1,500 men.' In America we value each individual. We particularly value the safety of these men who have sacrificed so much for our country.

"Those who are held in Southeast Asia and their families know that they are not forgotten and we will not let them down."

A cage in a Viet Cong PW camp where U.S. prisoners were reportedly held.

United Nations Resolution

On December 9, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed by a 67-30 vote a sponsored resolution aimed at getting protection for all prisoners of war.

Stating that direct repatriation of seriously wounded and seriously sick prisoners of war and repatriation or internment in a neutral country of prisoners of war who have undergone a long period of captivity constitute important aspects of human rights as advanced and preserved under the Geneva Convention and the United Nations Charter, the resolution—

I

"Calls upon all parties to any armed conflict to comply with the terms and provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war so as to ensure humane treatment of all persons entitled to the protection of the Convention and to permit regular inspection in accordance with the Convention of all places of detention of prisoners of war by a protecting power or humanitarian organization, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross;

II

"Endorses the continuing efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross to secure effective application of the Convention;

III

"Requests the Secretary-General to exert all efforts to obtain humane treatment for prisoners of war, especially for the victims of armed aggression and colonial suppression;

IV

"Urges the compliance with Article 109 of the Convention, which requires repatriation of seriously wounded and seriously sick prisoners of war and which provides for agreements with a view to direct repatriation or internment in a neutral country of able-bodied prisoners of war who have undergone a long period of captivity;

V

"Urges that combatants in all armed conflicts not covered by Article 4 of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, be accorded the same humane treatment defined by the principles of international law applied to prisoners of war;

VI

"Urges strict compliance with the provisions of the existing international instruments concerning human rights in armed conflicts and urges those who have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the relevant instruments in order to facilitate in all aspects the protection of the victims of armed conflicts."

The U.N. Resolution referenced a resolution adopted by the 21st International Conference of the Red Cross at Istanbul calling upon all parties to the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war to ensure that all persons entitled to prisoner of war status are treated humanely and given the fullest measure of protection prescribed by the conventions, and that all parties involved in an armed conflict provide free access to prisoners of war and to all places of their detention by a Protecting Power or by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

'No New Information'

Secretary Rogers Denounces Hanoi List As Propaganda Tactic

Three days before Christmas, with fanfare and the usual propensity for propaganda tactics, the North Vietnamese transmitted to the United States what they termed a complete and official list of Americans now held prisoners of war and persons who had died subsequent to crashing in North Vietnam, or later in a PW camp. There was nothing new about the list; it merely contained information already publicly known.

Use of the list, conveyed by North Vietnam's delegate general in Paris, Mai Van Bo, to representatives of two U.S. Senators and the Committee of Liaison with Families of Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam, was immediately denounced by officials of the State and Defense Departments.

Secretary of State William P. Rogers said in a press conference that the list of 339 American prisoners in North Vietnam and 20 dead contained no new information and that the Hanoi leaders had engaged in "a contemptible maneuver" in transmitting it.

Mr. Rogers emphasized that the move was calculated to divert attention from Hanoi's failure to comply with international law or with rules of ordinary human decency.

He said, "They asked two well-known Senators to send representatives to Paris. Obviously, that conveyed the impression that there was something of substance that they were going to convey to those Senators. And it raised the hopes of the families when they heard that there was a new list, and that it was presented in this fashion."

The fact of the matter, Mr. Rogers said, is that the list contained the same names that had been given to Mrs. Cora Weiss, head of the Committee of Liaison, some months back by the North Vietnamese. In fact, he said, it contained the names of 20 who were listed as dead, whereas the list that Mrs. Weiss brought back to the United States contained 22 listed as dead.

Mr. Rogers said, "That obviously creates additional emotional problems for the families of those who are not on this list—of the two who were listed as dead in the previous list and are not included in this list.

"If the other side has any interest in complying with international law, or rules of human decency for that matter, there are well-established ways to do it.

"The Geneva Convention provides that they are supposed to report the names of prisoners a week after the capture of those prisoners. It provides that prison camps are to be inspected by independent observers. It provides that sick and disabled are to be returned, repatriated.

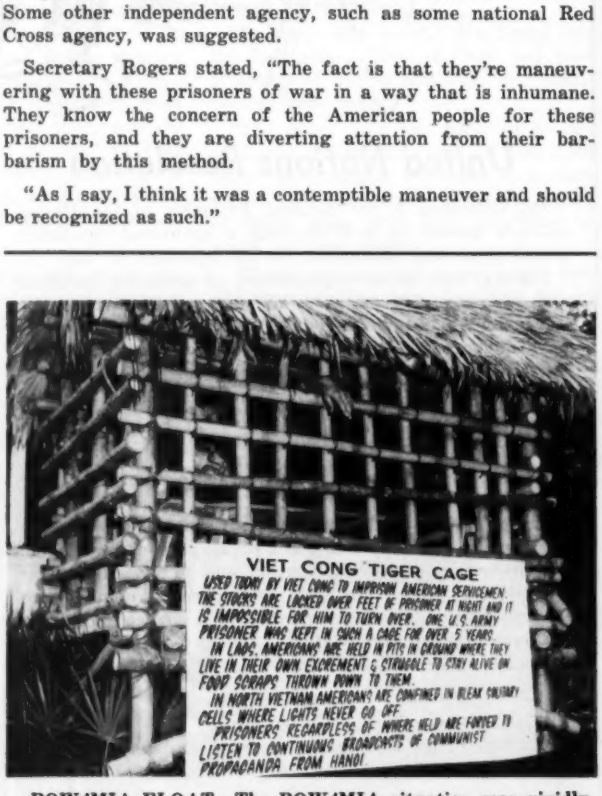
"None of these things have the North Vietnamese done, and they are trying to divert public attention from that. They are using this maneuver. It's gotten a great deal of attention all over the country, and probably the world, and they haven't done anything. As a matter of fact, they have created additional problems because they did suggest that this was an 'official' list."

Uncertainty will persist, Mr. Rogers said, "until the North Vietnamese comply with the rules of international law, until they permit an independent inspection of the prisoner of war camps."

He referenced the United Nations resolution, passed in mid-December by a large majority, urging all nations to comply with the rules of the Geneva Convention. The Secretary General, Mr. Rogers pointed out, suggested ways that the prison camps could be visited by independent observers even through the International Committee of the Red Cross has not been acceptable to the North Vietnamese as such an observer. Some other independent agency, such as some national Red Cross agency, was suggested.

Secretary Rogers stated, "The fact is that they're maneuvering with these prisoners of war in a way that is inhumane. They know the concern of the American people for these prisoners, and they are diverting attention from their barbarism by this method.

"As I say, I think it was a contemptible maneuver and should be recognized as such."


VIET CONG TIGER CAGE
USED TODAY BY VIET CONG TO IMPRISON AMERICAN SERVICEMEN. THE STOCKS ARE LOCKED OVER FEET OF PRISONER AT NIGHT AND IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO TURN OVER. ONE U.S. ARMY PRISONER WAS KEPT IN SUCH A CAGE FOR OVER 5 YEARS.
IN LAOS, AMERICANS ARE HELD IN PITS IN GROUND WHERE THEY LIVE IN THEIR OWN EXCREMENT & STRUGGLE TO STAY ALIVE ON FOOD SCRAPS THROWN DOWN TO THEM.
IN NORTH VIETNAM AMERICANS ARE CONFINED IN BLEAK SOLITARY CELLS WHERE LIGHTS NEVER GO OFF.
PRISONERS REGARDLESS OF WHERE HELD ARE FORCED TO LISTEN TO CONTINUOUS BROADCASTS OF COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA FROM HANOI.

POW/MIA FLOAT—The POW/MIA situation was vividly brought to the attention of thousands who viewed the Florida Governor's inaugural parade in Tallahassee January 5. Personnel of Eglin AFB, Fla., worked with the local community's POW/MIA group to construct a float which included highway billboards and a simulated Viet Cong "Tiger Cage."

Swedish Government Gets Information From Hanoi

Receipt by Sweden's Prime Minister Palme of information indicating the status of some 200 Americans missing or captured in North Vietnam was relayed to the United States by the Swedish Government in mid-December.

The information, Swedish officials advised the U.S. State Department, relates specifically to a group of Americans whose names were provided to the Prime Minister by PW/MIA families seeking his aid in verifying the current status of a loved one.

In acknowledging the Swedish Government communique, a State Department spokesman said in some cases the men are reported to be prisoners in North Vietnam and in other cases they are said to be dead or never having been captured by North Vietnam. The great majority of men—about three-quarters of the total—are in the latter category.

The information was transmitted by the Swedish Government direct to families. The Swedish Prime Minister stated recently in a press conference that he is prepared to receive additional inquiries from families and to undertake further inquiries.

The information furnished by Hanoi did not include any Americans not already carried on Defense Department records as prisoners of war. In all cases families had, in fact, received letters from the prisoner. A few men shown by the U.S. as prisoners in North Vietnam are described in the new information as never having been captured in North Vietnam.

Through the State Department, the United States expressed appreciation of the action by Sweden to assist American prisoners and their families. Concurrently, the State Department emphasized that the entire problem of identifying prisoners should have been resolved long ago, as required by the Geneva Convention on prisoners of war. The families of American men, a spokesman said, "have suffered needlessly—in many cases, for years—in the anguish of not knowing the fate of their loved ones."

The United States will continue to press the other side for official identification of all Americans held as prisoners, as well as the fullest possible accounting of the dead and the missing.

Family Packages (If Received) Meant Welcome Comfort

During the holiday season, through an arrangement announced by the North Vietnamese some weeks earlier, PW/MIA families were able to send 11-pound packages to North Vietnam. State Department officials say, however, that confirmation is lacking in many cases that all of the packages sent were received, in fact, by the men to whom they were addressed.

The mail and package situation, during Christmas and at all times, is much more uncertain in regard to Americans who are prisoners of war in South Vietnam or Laos. No agreement to accept holiday mail from families was ever announced by the Viet Cong or Pathet Lao, but neither did they issue prohibitions against it. However, despite the fact that some Americans were prisoners of war in South Vietnam and Laos as early as 1963, only one letter is known to have ever been received by a next-of-kin.

If and when American prisoners of war anywhere in Southeast Asia are, in fact, allowed to receive packages sent by their loved ones, it can mean they get such items as nutritional food substitutes, vitamin and protein pills, clothing, recreational objects, and small amounts of specialty foods that may make their lives as prisoners of war more endurable.

President Nixon: 'We Are Going To Continue The Negotiations . . .'

President Nixon in his December 1 press conference emphasized the importance of the prisoner of war issue and the willingness of the United States to engage in prisoner exchange in the interest of reaching meaningful negotiations in Paris and an earlier end to the war.

The following is the text of a press question and the President's answer:

QUESTION: *Mr. President, does what you said a while ago about the bombing of North Vietnam and the indications we've had from other officials of probably more raids to try to free American prisoners, does all that mean you've abandoned hope for the Paris peace talks reaching a negotiated settlement?*

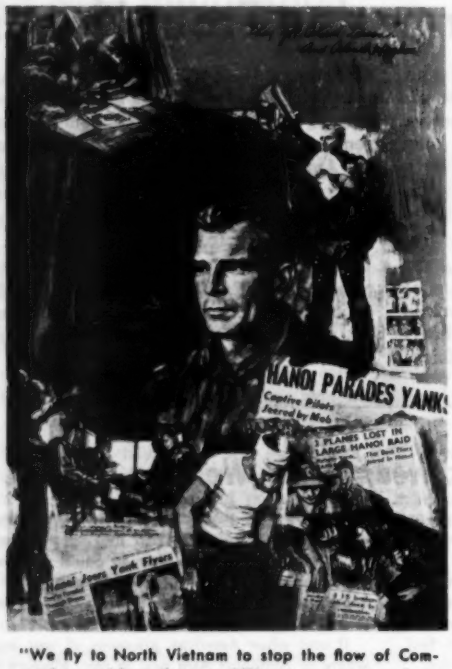
ANSWER: Not at all. We are continuing those talks. We do note today, Ambassador Bruce made an offer which refined the offer we had made earlier for a complete exchange of all prisoners of war. He offered to exchange on the part of both the United States and South Vietnam, 8,200 North Vietnamese that we have prisoners for approximately 800 American and other Allied prisoners that they have.

That's a 10 to 1 ratio, but we're willing to do that. Their failure to accept that offer will pinpoint something that is pretty generally getting known around the world, and that is this nation [North Vietnam] is an international outlaw, that it does not adhere to the rules of international conduct.

But we are going to continue the negotiations as long as they are willing to negotiate and as long as there is some hope to make progress on the prisoner issue or on a cease-fire and an earlier end to the war than the Vietnamization process will inevitably bring.

An Artist's View Of PWs/MIAs

The plight of American prisoners of war/missing in action has evoked the compassion and concern of all patriotic Americans. Miss Maxine McCaffrey, a noted American artist, has contributed these paintings to the Air Force Art Collection.



"We fly to North Vietnam to stop the flow of Communist munitions that are killing our American boys in South Vietnam."—Lt. Col. Gordon "Swede" Larson, USAF, shot down over Hanoi May 5, 1967.

"To our comrades up North!"—Fighter pilots' toast to U.S. airmen imprisoned and missing in action.

Above, "Air Force Family 1967-1969."—Lt. Col. James Lindberg Hughes (PW) and wife Dorothy and children. At right, "In His Country's Service, 1964-1970."

Deputy Secretary Packard Gives Observations

DoD Planners Face Decisions On Manpower, Military Capabilities

The most important and perhaps difficult problems facing Defense officials today are to decide on what manpower levels to set for the Armed Forces and to work out plans for future military capabilities of the U.S., both short and long-term, according to Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard.

Explaining why he thought the problems were so difficult, Mr. Packard said, "We have to recognize that it is the responsibility of the Defense Department to provide the military forces to support the United States' worldwide interests, to support the President in his foreign policy, and of course, to provide for the security of the United States which at the present time—in terms of threat—is primarily the strategic nuclear problem."

For this reason, he said during an interview, officials must try and assess what the levels of forces should be and what kind of forces are necessary to provide the capability the country must have.

Referring to the Nixon Doctrine—a blueprint of U.S. foreign policy which is dependent upon Partnership, Strength and Negotiation—Secretary Packard said this policy provides some guidance for the kind of forces that are needed.

Consequently, the problem is important, he noted, "because if you make the wrong decisions here, no matter how well you implement them, you have failed to do the job right."

Noting that the U.S. Government in the last two years sizably reduced Defense budgets, Mr. Packard explained that there are competing priorities at the Federal level for the resources that are to be allocated to Defense and non-Defense needs.

He said that in many ways it is much easier to plan forces where you have less limitations on the budget, "so we have to make some very difficult decisions in terms of what we can afford to do and do the best we can to make those decisions as nearly as possible the things that are the most important."

Secretary Packard, made a number of other observations, which included:

—**ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE:** This is feasible and "we are undertaking now to do those things which we think will increase the number of volunteers. We are approaching this not in terms of putting a specific deadline on when this will be achieved, but to approach it in terms of trying to reduce the reliance on the draft . . . my prediction is that it is going to be virtually impossible to do this before 1973, but I think that if we can do a number of things which we've given consideration to—that we can have a pretty good chance . . ."

—As for one consolidated military service such as adopted by Canada: "Well, I haven't heard anybody seriously talk about that alternative. We have, as you know, a strong tradition of individual services and I think it would be very unwise to consider anything in the way of consolidation."

—**FUNDS FOR MILITARY** in view of cutbacks: ". . . we are able to get some increases in our budget to take into account pay increases, and in the 1972 budget planning we will have $1.3 billion which will be available to apply to things which will make the service more attractive—partly pay increases and things that will help the service volunteer program."

VISITS WOUNDED—Vice Admiral Maurice F. Weisner, Commander of the U. S. Seventh Fleet, talks to Marine Corps Corporal Gary W. Schroeder aboard the Navy hospital ship USS Sanctuary. Adm. Weisner visited the floating hospital in DaNang, Republic of Vietnam. Cpl. Schroeder is a member of 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, currently operating in the DaNang area. Accompanying Adm. Weisner were Navy Captain Warren W. Hamilton, Medical Corps., Executive Officer of the Naval Hospital, and Commander Janice M. Burcham, Head Nurse of the hospital.

—**THE DRUG PROBLEM:** "The drug problem is serious in my view, whatever the level. There is some debate about how large the problem is. But we are undertaking to do what we can to improve the situation including primarily increased education. We're encouraging the military people to take whatever actions they can. We've brought out some guidance for them. It is very hard to know for sure how large the problem is but in my view it is certainly serious enough that we must give it some attention."

—**VIETNAMIZATION:** "We intend to continue to pursue the Vietnamization program. We are encouraged by the progress there. This will enable us to continue troop withdrawals.

—**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT:** "I have expressed some concern about research and development and I think it is rather obvious when you give the matter some consideration, that we may be able to reduce the number of people in our Armed Forces, but we cannot have smaller forces and also inferior weapons. So the extent to which we can improve the fire power, the fighting ability of our forces with their smaller numbers will be determined by, in the final analysis, by our research and development program."

Assistant Secretary Kelley Clarifies Statement On Discriminatory Practices

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Roger T. Kelley has clarified certain provisions of an earlier statement concerning DoD Directive 1100.15, "Equal Opportunity Within The Department Of Defense."

Mr. Kelley reviewed aspects of the Dec. 14, 1970, directive at a Dec. 17 press conference.

In a Jan. 7, 1971, memorandum to Secretaries of the Military Departments and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary Kelley noted, "In a recent press conference, I conveyed the erroneous impression that commanders overseas have less authority than CONUS (Continental United States) commanders in actions pertaining to discriminatory treatment directed against DoD personnel and their families. Such actions would, for example, include imposing rental restrictions on housing as well as imposing off-limits sanction on establishments that cater to Service personnel.

"The purpose of this writing is to make it clear that the provisions of DoD Directive 1100.15, including the authority for local action by commanders on discriminatory treatment, apply to all DoD components, both within and outside CONUS.

"My remarks at the press conference were intended to convey the special problems that commanders residenced in foreign countries may encounter in discrimination matters. This is because the social mores and customs of other nations are different from ours. These differences must be taken into account before commanders impose sanctions upon those guilty of discrimination. In these circumstances prudence may dictate consultation with others, including superior officers, before acting."

New Education Benefits Approved To Include Wives, Children Of PWs

President Nixon has signed into law new education benefits for wives and children of prisoners of war, and for servicemen who have served 181 days of active duty rather than two years as was previously required.

The new benefits became effective Dec. 24, 1970, according to Administrator of Veterans Affairs Donald E. Johnson.

The reduction in the active duty requirement to 181 days also applies to the eligibility of servicemen for GI loan guarantee benefits, Mr. Johnson said. This broadened eligibility makes it possible for men and women to use their GI Bill benefits sooner while still in military service, Mr. Johnson explained.

Under the new law, the wives and children of those members of the Armed Forces on active duty who have been listed for more than 90 days as missing in action, captured, "or forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power," are eligible for educational benefits.

For apprenticeship and on-the-job training courses under the GI Bill, servicemen are required to take 120 hours of training per month to receive full training allowance, and a lesser number of hours result in a proportionate reduction in the allowance.

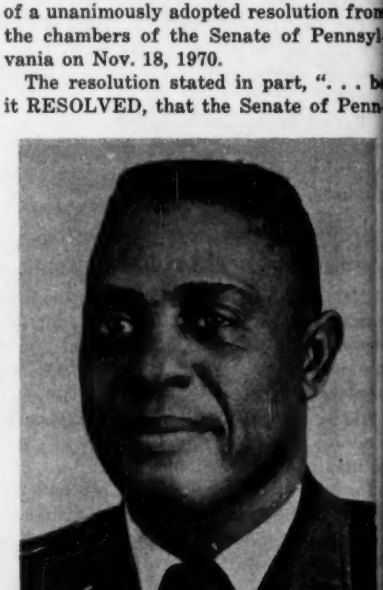
Lt. Col. Rogers Receives 'Key To City' Honors

Lieutenant Colonel Charles C. Rogers, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., student and Congressional Medal of Honor winner, was recently honored by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The native of Claremont, W. Va. was honor guest of a parade, sponsored by the War Veterans Council of Greater Harrisburg. At a luncheon following the parade, Lt. Col. Rogers was presented with the keys to the City of Harrisburg.

The commendation came in the form of a unanimously adopted resolution from the chambers of the Senate of Pennsylvania on Nov. 18, 1970.

The resolution stated in part, ". . . be it RESOLVED, that the Senate of Pennsylvania commends the City of Harrisburg and the War Veterans Council of Greater Harrisburg on their 1970 Veteran's Day observance, and joins the City Council and Nation in honoring, in connection therewith, Lt. Col. Charles C. Rogers, presently a student at the Army War College."



LT. COL. ROGERS

Lt. Col. Rogers also received an official letter of commendation from the Secretary of the Senate of Pennsylvania, Mark Gruell Jr.

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